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a magazine for marketers

MULTICULTURAL
MARKETING

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PASTRIES
sandwiches

LOCAL EAT WELL

12SUPOTH626

VOLUME 8 | ISSUE 2 | MAY 2012

EDITOR'S LETTER > CHANGE AGENTS



All across the modern marketing landscape, change increasingly seems to be the only constant. And the fast-paced diversification of the American consumer audience is transforming many of the industry's rules.

More than a half-century of social change, led by catalysts such as civil-rights pioneer Rep. John Lewis (pictured on page 17), has expanded our nation's middle class and swelled our professional ranks. As a result, the buying power of African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans and others continues to explode each year, with the ante for today's multicultural marketing professionals rising right alongside it.

In this issue, we've put together a "Multicultural Marketing Roundtable" (page 14), bringing together some of the top multicultural marketing experts in the country to discuss the changes taking place among ethnically diverse consumers and how brands should be responding.

We also look at marketing shifts in baseball. With visits to a host of minor league outposts, we examine how these clubs use integrated tactics to fill seats ("Playing Market Ball," page 24). Of course, businesses of all sizes are always looking for improved ways to reach an audience. To that end, we've got the scoop on Every Door Direct Mail®, a United States Postal Service® program that lets you target customers in specific locations without the costs of a mailing list ("Right on Target," page 20).

Finally, we delve into the world of auctioneering ("Auction Marketers Make a Bid to Win," page 30) to find out how some of the nation's top sellers are using mail to push offbeat items.

There's also our usual slew of facts, figures and tips scattered around this issue to help you navigate our fast-changing industry and keep your campaigns on course. So by all means, press on.

Thomas J. Foti

Thomas J. Foti, Editor

deliver
a magazine for marketers

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ROY RITCHIE

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ON THE COVER:
PHOTO ILLUSTRATION
BY GECKO IMAGING

DELIVERABLES

A BRIEF LOOK AT SOME BIG ISSUES
IN DIRECT MAIL

POSTINGS



BY THE NUMBERS

\$45.8 billion

The amount that direct mail expenditures increased to in 2011.¹

18 to 21

The age range in which more than 15% of consumers responded to direct mail ads or requests for funds in 2008.²

554,000,000

Pieces of mail the U.S. Postal Service® processed on an average day in 2011.³

\$46.9 billion

The amount that direct mail expenditures are expected to reach in 2012.¹

79%

The percentage of professionals who consider direct mail to be "effective" or "very effective."⁴

¹ Winterberry Group, "Outlook 2012: What To Expect in Direct and Digital Marketing"

² USPS Household Diary Study: Mail Use & Attitudes in FY 2010

³ usps.com: 2012 Postal Facts

⁴ ballantine.com: Direct Mail Statistics Show B2B Mailings are Still Effective

FUSE FUSE, GETTY IMAGES

RESPONSE

Pulling the trigger

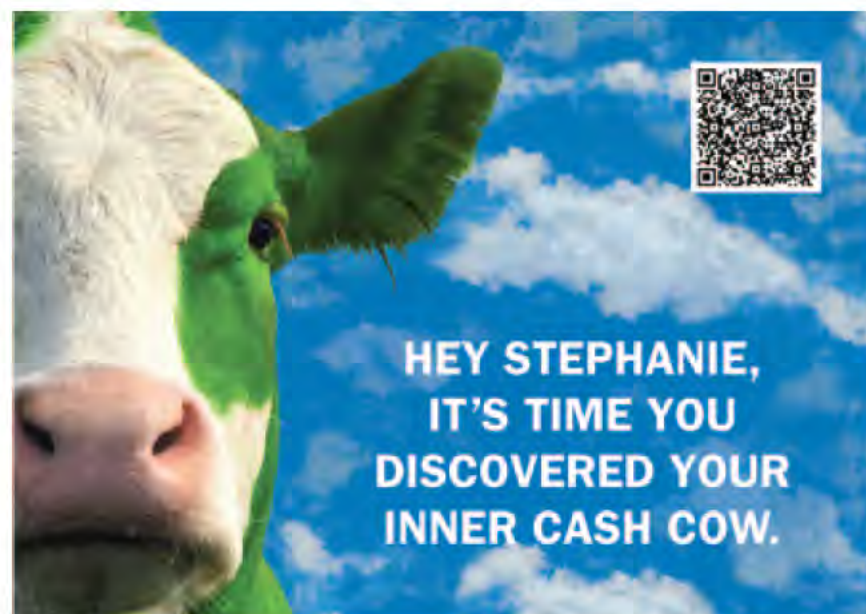
Marketers use integrated effort to gauge response, woo B-to-B targets

Recently, marketing automation company Eloqua considered including triggered direct mail to its suite of services. To gauge just how well the service would work, the Virginia company devised a simple plan: It implemented a triggered mail pilot test promoting Eloqua itself.

"To get our message in front of executives, we need to reach them over their preferred channels," says Elle Woulfe, Eloqua's director, marketing programs. "By adding a direct mail touch to an integrated e-mail campaign, we hoped to open the door with new contacts and reach them outside of their inbox."

Eloqua added the DM trigger so that, when an executive target clicked through an Eloqua e-mail, a customized direct mail response was activated.

One card, themed "Cash Cow," went to CMOs. Another, entitled "Profit Prophet," went to non-CMO prospects. The cards featured themed graphics, first-name personalization and a QR Code.



Executives who didn't respond immediately received a triggered e-mail; those who did respond drew another direct mailing. All mail pieces were tracked, so when a card was delivered, it instantly activated the next marketing step.

For Woulfe, the test underscored the traditional advantages of direct mail: "We're looking to add these direct mail touches into all of our lead nurturing programs. It gives us a way to reach those people who may not be as receptive to or who have 'emotionally unsubscribed' from e-mail."

"By adding a direct mail touch to an integrated e-mail campaign, we hoped to open the door with new contacts and reach them outside of their inbox."

— Elle Woulfe, Eloqua Senior Marketing Programs Manager

YOU SHOULD KNOW

DIMENSIONAL MAILERS ENJOYED A 5.72% RESPONSE RATE FOR HOUSE FILES IN 2010, AND THEY ACHIEVED A 3.59% RESPONSE RATE FOR PROSPECT FILES IN THE SAME YEAR. DMA 2011 Statistical Fact Book

CATALOGS

Penney, Wise

Iconic retailer jcpenny set to introduce new catalog



In late January, retail giant jcpenny launched a revamped merchandising, marketing and pricing strategy, flooding networks with new ads, promising consumers that the company will no longer engage in crazy discounting. The larger multichannel marketing strategy includes a direct mail book, replete with QR Codes, sent to customers 12 times a year and also made available online. "We're focused on targeting our customers, and direct mail is a key component to this outreach strategy," says Kate Coultas, spokesperson for jcpenny. Read more at delivermagazine.com/jcp.

RESEARCH

IN SYNCH

New study underscores the value of well-timed, synchronized multichannel marketing messages

It sounds almost like an aquatic sport: synchronized marketing. According to a study conducted by Intelisent, marketers who orchestrate their campaigns by delivering highly personalized messages via multiple messaging channels at precisely synchronized intervals can achieve nearly four times the revenue — and six times the ROI — of marketers who don't use a data-intensive approach.

The study, "Personalized Marketing and Real Time Data," also reveals the advantage direct mail marketers have over their digital counterparts. According to Intelisent, today's direct mail messages are much more personalized than most e-mail marketing efforts.

The Intelisent study also underscores what *Deliver*® has been reporting for years — that a multichannel marketing strategy incorporating direct mail/print, broadcast and digital is now essential. The study also reveals that too many marketers are slow to adopt consumer data analytics practices that could make their businesses more effective and profitable. The Intelisent report can be accessed by visiting intelisent.com/whitepaper.

POLITICAL MAIL

From mailbox to ballot box

ELECTION CAMPAIGNS ARE MIXING MAIL AND DIGITAL LIKE NEVER BEFORE

It's an election year, and marketers know what that means: mailboxes stuffed with donation appeals and urgent get-out-the-vote pleas. According to Borrell Associates, voters can expect even more election mail than usual in 2012, with political mail spending expected to exceed \$288 million. That's an increase of 11.6 percent from 2008.

Far more than in elections past, 2012 will be the year of digitally interactive mail, with political postcards and letters tricked out with features

like QR (quick response) Codes and social media links. For instance, on the Democratic side, the president's reelection campaign has launched a new online tool designed to tout his job growth accomplishments — bridging the gap between direct mail and online advertising.

Here's how the app works: Users input the address of a friend or relative online, and the app generates a physical piece of mail from the campaign. Supporters can send a physical postcard with three different



prewritten messages and a chart illustrating the number of job gains under this administration.

The app is part of a significant new online ad buy targeted toward key states that will be featured on local and national news sites.

Republicans are working with these new technologies as well. "Integrating emerging technologies, such as QR Codes and social media links, into proven voter contact staples like direct mail is vital to the long-term success of

any political candidate, regardless of ideology or partisanship," explains Brett Buerck, president of conservative consulting firm Majority Strategies. "And we certainly are incorporating those components into our GOP candidate's outreach efforts this fall."

However, the medium is but one piece of the marketing puzzle that candidates must solve, adds Buerck: "Medium or mechanics will never be substitutes for motivation and message."

"Integrating emerging technologies, such as QR Codes and social media links, into proven voter contact staples like direct mail is vital to the long-term success of any political candidate, regardless of ideology or partisanship." — Brett Buerck, President, Majority Strategies

ENGAGEMENT

Keeping Confidence

Epsilon study shows mail remains most trusted among consumers

Epsilon recently published the results of its latest Consumer Channel Preference Study, and guess what? Direct mail headed the list of preferred marketing channels.

According to the study, 36 percent of U.S. consumers

said direct mail is their channel of choice to receive marketing information in many categories, including financial services information. Sixty percent of consumers report feeling an emotional boost from receiving mail, noting that they "enjoy checking the mailbox for Postal mail."

Also, the preference for direct mail extends to the 18- to 34-year-old demographic in the U.S. and Canada — which underscores the importance of avoiding assumptions based on age. **See page 11 for more on channel preference.**

TOP: HILL STREET STUDIOS; BLEND IMAGES; GETTY IMAGES / BOTTOM: JUPITERIMAGES; COMSTOCK; GETTY IMAGES



PERSONALIZATION

What's in a Name? Profit.

Study shows continued dramatic growth in personalized mail

There's nothing necessarily wrong with addressing your direct mail to "Occupant," but a recent informal study of mail trends conducted by DirectMarketingIQ uncovers the skyrocketing appeal of personalized mail. Poring over its "Who's Mailing What!" archives, DirectMarketingIQ learned that in 2009, 28 percent of mail pieces were personalized. In 2010, that figure jumped to 34 percent, marking a remarkable 21-percent increase.

But last year, personalization saw even bigger increases, with seven of the 10 months studied registering variable data printing (VDP) usage even higher than 34 percent. Spikes occurred in February and May 2011, when VDP-enhanced mail peaked at 41 percent of all mail. Overall, the 2011 numbers represented a 46-percent leap from 2009 levels.

Those increases were enough for DirectMarketingIQ to declare personalization/VDP the 2011 direct mail Trend of the Year. "It's clear that the personalization/VDP trend is not going away," a report from the group concluded. "Companies and organizations are using prospect data in order to personalize their mail more than ever."

TOP: WESTEND61; GETTY IMAGES / BOTTOM: BRANDON LAUFENBERG; ISTOCK VECTORS; GETTY IMAGES

Talking Heads

Business pros share **SMART MARKETING SOLUTIONS**



Frank Imholte

President, Black Diamond Auctions

St. Cloud, Minnesota

Sometimes going the extra mile is what creates quality mail pieces — like when Imholte and his son, a graphic designer, flew a "puddle-jumper" over a Minnesota hobby farm to get aerial photos. "We had to tilt the plane because the wing was in the way," Imholte recalls. About 150 of the bidders who turned out had received brochures with the pictures. The hobby farm has a new owner: "You bet it sold," says Imholte.



Paul Pancho

General Manager, Obun Hawaii, Inc.

Honolulu, Hawaii

After adding mail to its toolkit last fall, marketing firm Obun now counts insurance companies, credit unions and healthcare providers as satisfied clients. One company is so pleased that it plans to expand its use of personalized postcards. "Hawaii is unique — eight islands separated by hundreds of miles in the Pacific," says Pancho. "So for us, direct mail fulfillment is the way to go."



Braden R. McCurdy

Associate Broker, McCurdy Auction, LLC

Wichita, Kansas

With roughly 3,000 pieces mailed weekly to "opt-in" list members, it's not unusual for this family-owned real-estate broker to find postcards of the homes they sell tagged onto potential clients' refrigerators or bulletin boards. A recent public sale found several potential buyers carrying cards they'd received to the event. Says McCurdy, "This method has proven consistent and effective for many years."



Malcolm Berg

President, Plum Creek Dental Group

Lockhart, Texas

Plum Creek wanted to increase its monthly tally of new patients while boosting its appointments with patients of record. A custom-designed mailing brought fast results for the mid-2011 campaign. "We saw 15 reactivations and 50 new customers just three months in," says Berg. "If conversion rates stay the same, we'll be looking at 30 reactivations and 100 new customers in six months."



Looking for more? Check out our Talking Heads section. It's a collection of smart solutions from big thinking marketers — delivermagazine.com/talkingheads/.



Let's Hear It for Great Creative

Why marketers who follow the "Rule of 40-40-20" shouldn't shortchange the 20.

If you have worked in direct mail for more than a few minutes, odds are you have heard of the "Rule of 40-40-20." It states that 40 percent of direct mail success depends on a well-targeted mailing list, 40 percent on a compelling incentive offer, and 20 percent on well-executed creative work.

We are all for any reminder of the importance of a solid mailing list and a sound offer as integral parts of a direct mail strategy. But

beware inferring from the Rule — as some do — that the creative execution deserves no more than the least of your attention.

The 40-40-20 breakout appears more symbolic than empirical, as shown by direct marketing pros who argue for a rule of 60-30-10, or even 70-20-10. But if direct marketers differ over ratios, most seem to agree on at least the gist of the Rule: that a well-targeted mailing list and a compelling incentive offer are crucial to a successful direct mail strategy.

Good so far. But some marketers take the Rule of 40-40-20 a step further. Eighty percent isn't bad, they reason, so why fuss over a mere 20?

It's easy to imagine that such thinking might drive some of the look-alike direct mail all of us receive from time to time. Not just the layout, but even the copy appears cloned: "There's never been a sale like this blah blah small type you have been pre-selected maybe perhaps to be considered for approval blah blah we care blah blah small type proudly serving you blah blah small type **REPLY NOW.**" If you suspect that the marketer doesn't much care if you take in only the offer and "REPLY NOW," you may be on to something. After all, with proper targeting and a hot deal du jour, the odds that you will respond increase accordingly. Even if the look and copy fail to engage you.

There is, of course, nothing wrong with doing direct mail that way. Especially when it proves profitable. But before you get too far along with that approach, we hope you'll also learn from the direct mail pros who, after doing their homework to come up

with a well-targeted mailing list and a desirable offer, set about crafting breakthrough, arresting, knock-ye-socks-off creative work. We wholly endorse the spirit of the Rule of 40-40-20. Due attention to the mailing list and offer is essential. But why risk shortchanging results by stopping there?

Pour your heart into the creative. When you reap the rewards, let us know. You might end up featured in *Deliver*.® More important, you might end up with an even healthier bottom line.

"Narrowing down mailing lists based on specific attributes that relate to a physical location can be one way to target new homeowners. For example, one can mail to recipients who have recently changed addresses or who have been registered at an address for a short period of time. Another method would be to target areas that have a high volume of new construction."

— Cynthia Fedor, Marketing Team Lead, QuantumDigital

CONSIDER THIS:

35% of new homeowners purchase bedding.¹

33% of new homeowners purchase lawn equipment and tools/hardware.¹

50% of new homeowners purchase home decorations and accents.¹

15% of new homeowners purchase computers, home security and automobiles.¹



30 million
different U.S. households
change residence every year.¹



35%
of families plan to or
will move into a new
home after having their
first child.²

HOMING IN ON A RECOVERING MARKET

With a battered U.S. housing market finally showing signs of recovery, marketers have growing reason to be hopeful about renewing efforts to reach what has traditionally been a reliable and coveted consumer group — new homeowners.

Why are homeowners so desirable? Because they represent a diverse group with one common trait: They are ready, and often need, to spend. For large brands, new homeowners represent a chance to score sales on big-ticket items (think appliances, furniture, etc.). For smaller, local businesses, this consumer group offers a chance to tap new revenue streams and foster loyalty among a fresh customer base. — Allan Nahajewski

WITHIN THE FIRST FEW MONTHS:

New homeowners purchase more products and services in the first **6 months** after moving than an established resident spends in **2 years.**²

The average new homeowner spends more than **\$9,000** on purchases within the first few months of a move, and the average renter spends close to **\$4,000.**¹

Within several weeks of their moves, nearly **60%** of homeowners and **40%** of renters purchase furniture.¹

New residents establish an average of **71** new business relationships in their first few months.¹

¹ Our Town America: "Background: New Movers and Purchasing Patterns" ² stageoflife.com: Home Ownership

What's been one of your greatest direct mail successes?"



S

GLENN WEISSMAN

Vice President, Business Development
Ebony Marketing Research

My daughter-in-law bought a beauty salon. After buying it, she didn't have much money left for advertising, but she did have enough for an effective, laser-focused direct mail program. The family helped her focus on new movers, since they are very likely candidates to need a new hair stylist. She also targeted new engagements, since weddings and spa parties provide good opportunities for a salon. **Her meticulously targeted, ongoing direct mail efforts created a never-ending flow of new customers — and for just a minimal investment.** That's a recipe for success for any small business.



M

PENELOPE WELCH, CFRE

Director of Philanthropy
Capital Caring

To reach a \$1 million direct mail revenue goal for hospice programs, we worked with DirectMail.com to segment our donor database based on giving profiles and to craft personalized messaging. **This approach increased our revenue, number of donors and average gift amount, even while saving more than 25 percent on our direct mail costs.** A later appeal effort yielded an additional \$140,000, with the average gift rising from \$27 to \$62, thanks to DirectMail.com's precise targeting, graphics design, envelope teasers and inserts. In a challenging 2010, results exceeded 2008 and 2009 by 27 percent and 29 percent, respectively.



L

SCOTT COGGIN

Vice President, Marketing Data
Services, dDirect

Georgia Tech asked us to develop a direct mail program for recruiting high school football players by effectively communicating the university's unique sports history as well as its top-ranked academic programs. **We created and produced weekly, personalized mailings full of information and colorful photography about the coaches and players, the team and the school to a targeted list of 1,000 high school players and their coaches.** Along with winning a national direct marketing award, we take great pride in helping the Yellow Jackets build a winning team!

PORTRAITS BY GLENN

Which Channel Are You On?

Study finds consumers trust mail more for many types of communication



Cliff Rucker is Vice President of Sales for the U.S. Postal Service.

Now, no one is arguing that marketers should abandon their digital communication strategies. Clearly, the best course of action is a smartly devised multichannel communication plan that surrounds your customers with your brand messages.

But as you consider how to spend your increasingly limited marketing dollars, be careful about pulling money from traditional media to fund emerging digital channels. It may be a move that your customers will not appreciate.

The smart advertiser knows the consumer is the center of the marketing strategy, so listen to the voice of the consumer. If their preference is mail, why not include it in your overall strategy or test the addition of a direct mail component to your next campaign?

To help, the United States Postal Service® has assembled a new Advertising Agency and Association Team as a resource. This consultative group is designed to interact with advertising agencies and marketing firms to help determine how a direct mail component might add fuel to their campaigns.

The team can also assist with identifying other strategic partners necessary to create, produce and distribute a direct mail component as part of any integrated marketing and communications strategy.

Ad agencies and marketing companies can take advantage of this resource team by e-mailing Janine Konieczny at pamela.j.konieczny@usps.gov.

Every good marketer knows that the most effective way to communicate with your customers is the way that they want to be communicated with. Building trust with customers is difficult if your messaging is an annoyance to them, rather than a benefit.

The explosion of media channels has only complicated the issue. With more channels to communicate, which is the right channel at any given time?

A recent Consumer Channel Preference Study by Epsilon Targeting

found that 60 percent of U.S. consumers "enjoy checking the mailbox for Postal mail" and, compared with e-mail, direct mail is their preferred channel to receive financial service information (36 percent for mail vs. 8 percent for e-mail).

Epsilon's conclusion is that "direct mail continues to serve as the channel of choice and most trusted for recipients of marketing information in many categories." In fact, mail topped e-mail in 14 categories measured by the study.

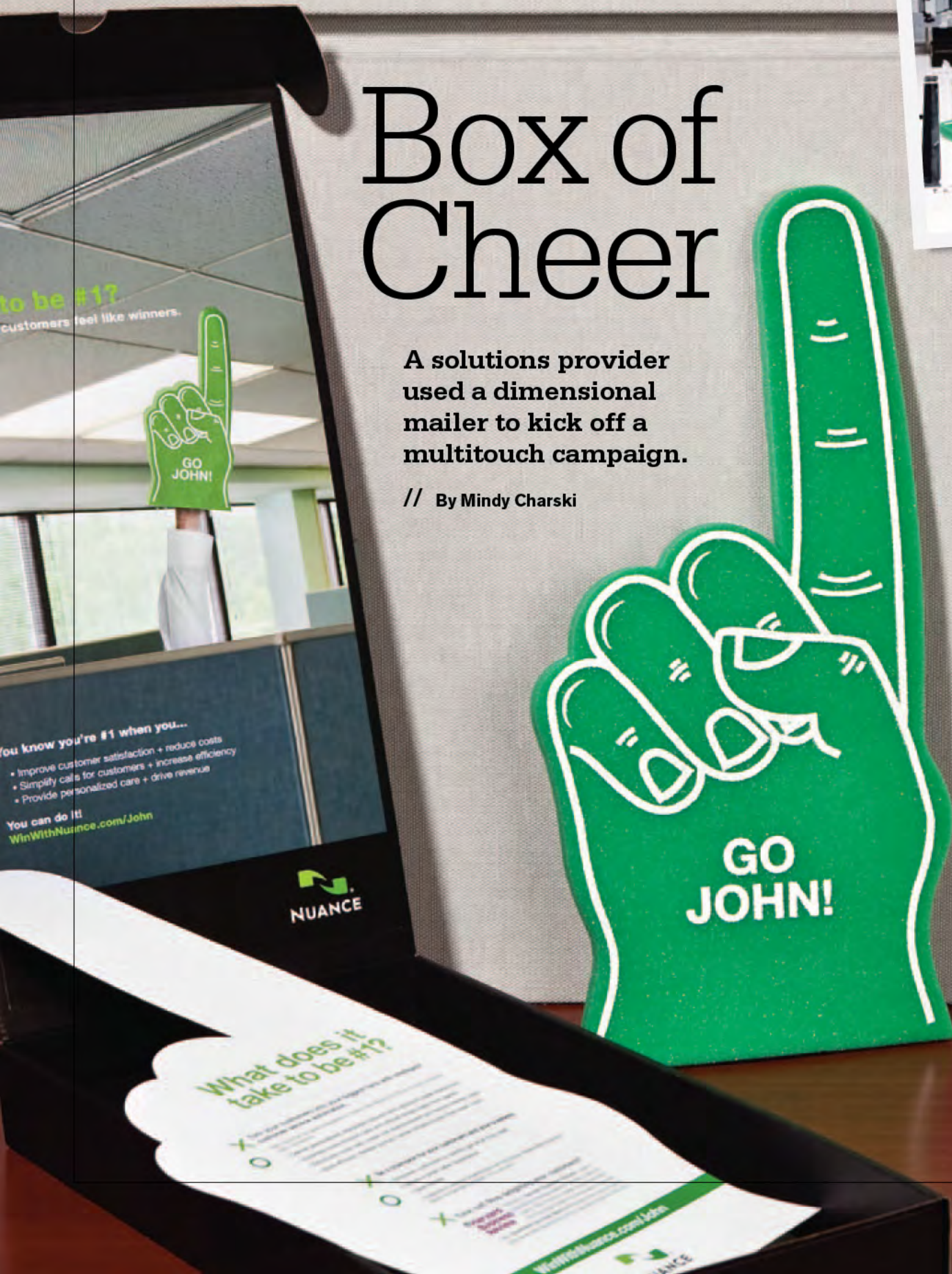
Trust is a big reason. Consumers still struggle with the credibility of information they receive through social media channels.

JASON REED, PHOTODISC, GETTY IMAGES

Box of Cheer

A solutions provider used a dimensional mailer to kick off a multitouch campaign.

// By Mindy Charski



The company is called Nuance Communications, but there wasn't much subtlety in the integrated campaign the voice- and language-solutions provider launched last spring in an effort to reach new targets.

How could there be, with a mail package that included a large, personalized foam finger designed to grab as much attention as possible? No, the message from Nuance was quite direct: Nuance's customer service automation products can help your company score big with customers. The campaign marks a targeted appeal to an audience of 1,416 directors and vice presidents who manage contact centers at 497 U.S.-based companies, including retail banks, utilities and healthcare insurers.

Among other duties, these centers field calls for customer service and execute financial transactions. In many instances, Nuance sent the mailer to multiple people in the same company.

"The foam finger is an icon of support," explains Colin O'Neill, creative director of Babcock & Jenkins, the agency that created the campaign. "We wanted to show how the people responsible for contact center operations can turn unhappy customers into supporters of the business." Nuance also wanted to position itself as an organization that is a "die-hard supporter" of their prospects' efforts, according to O'Neill.

Nuance's enterprise division launched the campaign with the goal of securing sales meetings with top-tier targets. The effort

began with the dimensional mailer, which also includes a customized letter and three magnets with phrases like, "You're #1 when customers feel like winners." A personalized URL (PURL) with the prospect's name is printed throughout the piece, but the magnets — which could be put up around an office — display a PURL with the company's name.

The mailer's singular task is to drive recipients to the PURL, a robust microsite featuring relevant content in forms like webcasts, reports and articles. The site also gives the contact information of an assigned sales representative. That sales rep and the marketing team received nearly real-time notification of what targets did on the PURL, including what they looked at and which content pieces they downloaded.

About two weeks after the mailer arrived, Nuance sent an e-mail with an additional content offer for visiting the microsite, like a market research report. Every two weeks the company sent another e-mail, and after a total of four e-mails, Nuance sent targets a personalized letter and a book that featured a customer's case study. One more e-mail followed two weeks later. "There were many top-tier targets who didn't respond until the fifth or sixth touch that we sent them, so you could make the argument if we had just sent them one or two things, we never would have realized that benefit," says Marcie Lascher, Nuance's director of enterprise marketing.

The campaign's overall response was 21.7 percent. The effort generated 48 meetings and put \$5 million-plus in the pipeline. "If you're sending somebody a nice, attention-grabbing, three-dimensional box, even if they have an assistant who opens their mail, it's likely still going to get through to them," Lascher says.

The Burlington, Mass.-based firm also helped boost the success of the effort by hiring a vendor to check and tweak the information of prospects. "If we had not verified the data, it would have been a waste of money," Lascher says. "At the end of the day, if you're going to do direct mail, it's all about verifying your data, sending direct mail to the right people and keeping your database clean. It's an investment you have to make."

THE ESSENTIALS:

Company: Nuance Communications (Burlington, Mass.) **Agency:** Babcock & Jenkins (Portland, Ore.) **Target Audience:** 1,416 directors and vice presidents who manage contact centers at 497 U.S.-based companies. **Goal:** Drive targets to a PURL and secure sales meetings. **DM Vehicle:** A box (18 X 8.75 X 2 inches) with a personalized foam finger, three magnets and a customized letter; a second mailer contained a letter and a relevant book. **Response:** 21.7 percent based on responses to campaign touches; generated 48 meetings and put \$5 million-plus in the pipeline.

MULTICULTURAL MARKETING ROUNDTABLE

Our panel explores how today's brands are reaching ethnically diverse consumers.

BY BRUCE BRITT AND
EDDIE B. ALLEN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
JOE VAUGHN



It's 2012, and diversity has become, more than ever, an obvious and accepted reality in American life. An **African American** is president of the United States and a civil-rights icon is honored with a memorial in the National Mall in Washington, D.C. **Asian American** athletes adorn magazine covers and dominate highlight reels. Meanwhile, a Latina serves on the Supreme Court, and **Latinos** as a whole constitute the fastest-growing ethnic group in the nation.

And then there's the spending power. The Selig Center projects that black buying power in the United States will rise from \$957 billion in 2010 to \$1.2 trillion in 2015. Asian Americans are expected to wield \$696.5 billion in buying power by 2015. Meanwhile, the purchasing power of America's 10.4 million Latino households already exceeds \$1 trillion.

So why, in light of these massive strides and shifts in U.S. demographics, do so many American brands and businesses still seem to struggle with getting tailored, appropriate and effective messages about their products and services to such ethnically diverse consumers? What's right with multicultural marketing these days? What's wrong? And how does direct marketing get better?

In an effort to foster open discussion about these and other pertinent questions, *Deliver*® convened a panel of distinguished multicultural marketing specialists, the sort of independent minds you consult when you're ready to get serious about connecting with diverse consumers. Though most panelists agreed that marketing to diverse targets (especially blacks and Latinos) has steadily improved, they also agreed that U.S. companies still have much progress to make.

As successful multicultural marketers such as McDonald's and the U.S. Marines understand, multicultural marketing is not some advertising backwater, but a veritable ocean of potential opportunities. Yet as our panelists explain in the proceeding roundtable, multicultural marketing is not a smash-and-grab plundering of ethnic wealth. When done right, marketing to diverse consumers is ultimately a supportive investment in the communities that you do business in. For more insights on how to earn the trust, faith and dollars of this combined \$2 trillion market, read on.

ABOUT OUR PANELISTS



Maria Lopez-Knowles is the president of GH Latino at the New York office of GlobalHue, a full-service marketing communication agency with total market and cultural expertise. Lopez-Knowles also founded and led MRM Worldwide's practice of targeting U.S.-born Hispanics via digital marketing. Her honors include 2009's AdColor Innovator Award.



Clifton Simmons is senior copywriter at The Marketing Store in Chicago, which specializes in youth and family marketing, consumer-oriented digital, direct marketing and multicultural marketing. Simmons has more than 20 years of marketing experience. He also educates students and aspiring advertising pros through his award-winning blog, Professor Ad Man.



Ken Droz is an independent marketing and public relations specialist. The head of Southfield, Mich.-based Kenneth Droz Consulting, his decades-long career has often focused on entertainment and sports marketing. His agency experience includes film promotions and consulting for the Michigan Film Office.



DELIVER: Give us a widescreen view of multicultural marketing. Have things improved from, say, a decade ago?

MILLER: I don't know if it's gotten better, but it has evolved to include other segments. Back in the day, multicultural marketing, that meant African American. Now it's expanded to include other groups. Some even refer to "cross-cultural marketing" because marketers are looking at how to connect one message with more than one segment.

BYNUM: It has improved in front of the camera, where you see more African American models and more African Americans in commercials. So you see the face. However, you don't find those African Americans behind the camera, behind the concepts, and that's where you get a lot of mistakes.

DELIVER: What are the most common mistakes companies make when attempting to market to diverse audiences?

LOPEZ-KNOWLES: Mistake number one: Assuming that if I target the Spanish-language-dominant, first-generation Hispanic with Spanish-language television advertising, then I've covered the Hispanic market and done my job. Mistake number two: Assuming that I'm reaching the English-language-dominant, second-generation Hispanic with my general-market advertising. You may be reaching them, but are you making an effective connection? Are you touching them? Mistake number three: Neglecting to create unique marketing efforts to target the bilingual/bicultural English-language-dominant Hispanic. This group needs to be reached in a culturally, linguistically and intellectually relevant fashion. Speaking to them in the same manner they speak to each other validates them and drives effective brand connections.

BYNUM: I think the biggest mistake is not getting involved. The best companies create and participate in some events, such as sponsorships that make a difference in the community, or they may be a major player in something that the community specifically identifies as part of their culture. The companies that do multicultural marketing well do a form of integrated marketing where they're not just placing ads, doing billboards or starting a Facebook account.

MILLER: I think they're making many of the same mistakes in that the African American and Latino segments continue to be undervalued and underrepresented. With African Americans, it's just seeing us as a monolith, and not recognizing that we're not just different from the mainstream — but also different from each other. I think it might be the same with Latinos. Many marketers are still identifying Latinos as only Mexicans. They don't understand that Puerto Ricans are different from Cubans, who are different from Mexicans, who are different from Dominicans.

SIMMONS: You can't talk to all of us the same way. Where we are in life defines our wants and needs. For example,

Family A (a mom in her 30s, a dad in his 30s, two kids) and Single Man/Woman A (in his or her 20s) can live in the same neighborhood, but they may not have the same needs or interests. Too often marketers just cast a wide net and go for the sweet spot — young teens and adults with disposable income. Let's say we took a poll in that same neighborhood and asked everyone, "Who speaks for Black America?" I guarantee you'd get different answers. But if you restructure that question and ask males, ages 18 to 25, "Who is the most influential African American?" you may start to get more consistent answers. You have to define the segment of the multicultural audience you wish to reach and use the elements that connect best with that group.

DELIVER: Do you suspect that some mainstream marketers are not engaging for fear of rousing racial sensitivities?

MILLER: Well, yes. Multicultural marketing does require more time, and it's more challenging. There's a lot of dynamics, a lot of politics. First of all, if it doesn't come from senior management, many lower-level marketers don't care. So if there's no senior management buy-in, you get this nonchalant attitude toward targeted advertising. But when you do have senior management buy-in, you're more likely to invest in research, because doing research with these segments gives you a lot of ammunition. If you're not talking to them, how do you know them? With a lot of these guys, it's a case of "my next door neighbor is black" or "my kid's tutor is Indian," so they feel that they're in there.

DELIVER: How do companies avoid any appearance of insensitivity or presumptuousness that comes with this shallow understanding?

CHERRY: The messaging has to come from a strategic place that's driven from the insights, not just putting a black or Hispanic family there and writing a headline that says, "Come buy my stuff." It's to capture that moment and experience that maybe your average mass marketer has not thought about. For instance, when I do direct mail, it's about bringing out a message that something happened in your life many years ago — or it could have been yesterday — and I'm bringing it back and sort of sharing with you and everybody else. Those things make people feel comfortable.

DELIVER: What about creative in multicultural marketing? We've all seen the racially ambiguous model who's intended to pass for every person of color ...

MILLER: It's not wrong to do that, per se. Ideally, that's how everybody says we should live. But we continue to find that if you're African American or Latino or Asian — if a brand has an effective campaign with a targeted, all-ethnic cast — ethnically diverse consumers are more likely to pay attention to the ad. In focus groups, they say they don't — but trust me, they do.

CHERRY: It starts with having an idea that is honest — especially with direct mail. A lot of times you're using stock photography and images that are very staid. You have to stay away from those images. Imagine a photographer came into your house for a family dinner. The photographer



TRANSFORMER: Social changes sparked by leaders like U.S. Rep. John Lewis, a noted civil rights activist, have strengthened multicultural audiences.



Russell L. Bynum has served as president of Bynums Marketing & Communications Inc. for 27 years. His experience includes agency and account management, advertising planning, personnel management, public relations and event planning. Bynum has provided services for Capital Blue Cross, the Pittsburgh Pirates and GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare, among others.



Boasting 25 years of ad experience, **Quincy Cherry** serves as SVP/chief creative director for UniWorld Group, supervising creative strategy and vision on client accounts. Prior to joining UniWorld, Quincy spent 11 years at Matlock Advertising in Atlanta as the SVP, Chief Creative Officer. He also was Creative Director at Burrell Communications Group in Chicago.



Pepper Miller is founder and president of the Hunter-Miller Group, which specializes in research and marketing strategy. Her clients include American Airlines, Allstate and General Mills. She is author of *Black (STILL) Matters in Marketing* and co-author of *What's Black About It? Insights to Increase Your Share of a Changing African-American Market*.

A MILITARY CAMPAIGN

The U.S. Marine Corps turns to sharp multicultural marketing strategies to boost, and diversify, recruitment. **BY BRUCE BRITT**

During its storied 236-year history, the U.S. Marines Corps has earned a reputation for absolute excellence in the fields of military science and national defense. Now, the legendary fighting force is becoming known as a precise multicultural marketing machine. Since partnering with the independent multicultural

advertising agency UniWorld Group some 11 years ago, the Marine Corps has implemented a series of award-winning, integrated campaigns that have made it a fearsome power on the advertising battlefields.

The Marines' 2011 recruiting brochure provides a case in point. The trifold brochure promotes the Frederick C. Branch Leadership Scholarship, which is awarded to prospects who meet Marines requirements and agree to attend a selected historically black college or university. (White, Latino and Asian American students are eligible also.)

The brochure presents a variety of photos illustrating the Marines experience, including action-themed photos of military missions. Additional photos of African American aviators and judges suggest the range of vocations recruits can select from the Marines Occupational Specialties program. To incentivize prospects, the brochure includes information about financial assistance, and is complemented with two perforated Business Reply Mail®

Cards for recipients to give to friends. "We understand that not everybody responds to solicitations via the web, so the other way that we intimately reach prospects is through direct mail and collateral materials," says Peter Brown, UniWorld account director for the Marines Corps. "Direct mail is really the intimate, one-to-one brand relationship mechanism that drives prospects to action."



would be there almost like a photojournalist, capturing that moment. Multicultural audiences are really attuned to authenticity, and when we see it done wrong, we'll say that's clearly not us and throw it away.

DELIVER: Given this, how effective then is direct mail at reaching ethnically diverse consumers?

BYNUM: I look to direct mail to get a feel for what your brand is all about. The other mediums are in the air, and I can cut them off at any time. With direct mail, at least they have to look at it.

LOPEZ-KNOWLES: I think direct mail is effective in reaching Hispanic consumers as long as it's hyper-targeted. By that, I mean that merely selecting a Spanish surname from a database and using that as the opportunity to deliver a Spanish-language-only piece of direct mail to a perceived Spanish-language household is a mistake. To work effectively, direct mail marketers need to have a deep understanding of target composition. What language do they prefer? Are they U.S. born? Are they an influencer? What does their multigenerational household look like? Knowledge of these variables and the ability to leverage them to create a tailored marketing piece will drive results. That's hyper-targeted direct mail.

SIMMONS: Some of the most promising stats I've seen say that only 30.5 percent of African Americans are exposed to direct mail, but more than 75 percent read what they receive. So if three out of four are willing to take the time to read what you have to say, why aren't more marketers taking advantage of it?

CHERRY: Direct mail is *beyond* the answer. You want the audience to invite you into their homes so you can have a conversation. Direct mail will get you there, Day One.

DELIVER: What are the best ways of integrating mail with other channels to capture diverse consumers?

LOPEZ-KNOWLES: One of the most effective ways is to ensure that the total consumer experience is absolutely synchronized. Multichannel planning ensures that each media vehicle used has an objective and works synergistically to build a greater, more relevant consumer experience.

DROZ: Coordination and consistency of the campaign and messaging, for starters. The big priority is to establish an identity, and that's harder to do with different messages, themes and campaigns that may end up in different media. Keep logos, theme lines and imagery as consistent, or singular, as possible. Plus, ideally, you'll synergize the efforts from each platform. I'm big on storytelling, so sometimes you have one character in one medium interacting in another platform with additional characters, or storylines.

SIMMONS: When you work with multiple channels like digital and direct, each piece needs to be able to



work independently. But all together, they tell the big story. The DM can be used to direct the audience to mobile and online sites. Mail pieces can also be interactive.

DELIVER: What advice would you give on improving the quality of direct mail targeted at diverse consumers?

LOPEZ-KNOWLES: I'd say ensure that multiple lists can be secured, that your list is well-scrubbed, that you have a compelling offer based on your knowledge of the target, and that your creative and messaging are communicated and written in a way that effectively connects with the target and/or multiple members of the target's household.

DROZ: I would put every emphasis and effort on the creative. Make not only your message creative, but more important, make the piece itself stand out from all the others who so often do by-the-numbers advertising. Clutter is clutter, no matter what industry you're in. You want the person to always say, "Wow!" when they see your piece, or message, or product.

DELIVER: Blacks and Hispanics are often discussed when talking multicultural marketing. But what about Asian Americans? Do marketers underserve them?

CHERRY: The reality is that for the most part, marketers focus largely on acculturated Asian Americans and lump them into the general consumer market, as their perception is that they behave very much like the general consumer market. It's unfortunate that companies don't take as serious a look on the impact of Asian sub-culture on the mainstream.

DELIVER: What are proper ways to reach out to Asian American consumers?

CHERRY: In some instances at UniWorld, we communicate by looking at the Asian American market through racial or ethnic lenses, in

which case we look at levels of acculturation versus a more holistic approach that considers not only the racial or ethnic foundation of a group of consumers, but also what other factors unite that group of consumers as informed by overall culture. Hence, appropriately messaged high-end marketing activities, including direct mail, work well with Asian American consumers.

DELIVER: What does the future hold for multicultural marketing?

DROZ: Good question. There is the need to not — and pardon the term here — ghetto-ize, or stereotype, the multicultural audience. There is a huge upscale segment out there that likes nice things, and will spend money on them. That transcends race.

SIMMONS: Marketers are going to have to adapt to where the audience exists. Look at who are the real influencers for the multicultural market. Look at social media and even bloggers who have emerged to become a voice in the multicultural market. There's a place for direct marketing in all of this. Some smart thinking can make it work.

LOPEZ-KNOWLES: I think the future is about more personalized relationships that drive advocacy. It's about influence and the effect that the greater network has on results. It's about providing the influencers with the tools to tap in to their networks in order to drive activism. And that's true across language, generations, cultural backgrounds, media, or what have you. 

WANT MORE INFO ON THE FAST-CHANGING MULTICULTURAL MARKETS?

Be sure to watch for our feature story on reaching Asian American consumers in an upcoming issue of *Deliver*.®



A high-tech
advertising solution
relies on **RIGHT ON TARGET**
mail for success.

BY ALLAN ADLER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOE VAUGHN

M

Market Doctors Direct is a Houston-based marketing firm that has found a niche in the high-tech world, combining traditional direct mail with innovative digital technology to deliver solutions for clients.

The company produces the iTextDirectory.com, a 16- to 24-page directory that promotes local businesses along with text numbers for coupons, offers and promotions. Recipients can use the directory to find an attorney, dentist, day care, car dealership or virtually any other service.

The directories offer an exclusive to advertisers (one attorney per issue, or one auto sales firm) and have a shelf life of about three months, which allows customers to use the book as a reference not just once or twice, but continually for several months, says Debbie Drury, president of Market Doctors Direct.

To get the directory into the hands of consumers, though, the company takes a very targeted approach, relying on Every Door Direct Mail® from the U.S. Postal Service.®

"We've had five times the response rate with Every Door Direct Mail, compared to e-mailed coupons," Drury says. "And sometimes the rate has been higher than 7 percent, with the combination of adding in the mobile text coupon feature. People

REACH EVERY DOOR... EASILY

Using Every Door Direct Mail allows advertisers to reach key target markets, without having to compile – or maintain – names and addresses. Here's a quick look at how it works:

1. The Every Door Direct Mail website (usps.com/everydoordirectmail) houses the online tools needed for the process. You can choose to create the mailing and drop it at the Post Office™ or, if you're already the holder of a mailing permit, to drop it at a Business Mail Entry Unit.
2. The website will capture your information, then present you with a tool that allows you to define the area you want to reach by city, by ZIP Code, by county or by using a location, such as the address of your store or business.
3. You can decide whether you want to reach city addresses, rural addresses or PO Boxes, and whether you want residential only, or business addresses too. You can even view the addresses selected in a map format that allows you to carefully designate the area you want to reach, right down to selecting specific carrier routes.
4. Click the submit button and the tool does the rest, furnishing you with a count of how many addresses are in the defined area and the cost to mail to them. The tool will even print out the correct forms for you to take with you to the Post Office when you drop off the piece you want to mail.
5. Need more? Then be sure to visit usps.com/everydoordirectmail.



CHOOSE YOUR ROUTE: Every Door Direct Mail allows businesses to choose the addresses they want to reach by city, ZIP Code or even carrier route. An online tool makes it easy to identify the target area.

are busy and get so many e-mails that they can't answer them all in one day. Today consumers want fast, instant, immediate answers and results."

Every Door Direct Mail allows businesses of all sizes to target customers in specific geographic areas by ZIP Code,™ neighborhood or delivery route without the time or expense required to compile a list of the names and addresses of everyone in that area.

Under Every Door Direct Mail, all mailings can be distributed by Postal carriers as supplements along with that day's mail to every door that businesses want to reach. The Every Door Direct Mail tool also lets advertisers see how many businesses and homes are within a certain area or radius of a specific location (see sidebar for details).

Market Doctors Direct uses ZIP Code locations to identify the specific markets it wants to target, then uses the Every Door Direct Mail online tool to pull together the paperwork for the mailing.

While regional companies like Market Doctors have been steady users of the service, large national companies also are finding Every Door Direct Mail can be an important asset to their marketing efforts. Many chains are using the service to test advertising campaigns in specific areas before deciding whether to take them nationally, or even worldwide.

One multinational fast-food restaurant chain has utilized Every Door Direct Mail to fuel its marketing success and continue its growth. The chain, which operates 320 restaurants in 10 countries, including 50 in the United States, has been so pleased with the program that it has made it part of its company-wide marketing efforts.

The company was looking for a delivery channel that could provide reliability. It wanted to make sure its promotional materials were reaching its customers and it wanted to know who was getting the mailers. All of that was accomplished by using Every Door Direct Mail. That was an assurance it didn't find through other distribution channels, such as e-mail.

Typical of its marketing efforts was a recent mailing of 8,000 postcards offering special discounts on meals. The results were considered excellent with a 4-percent to 5-percent response rate, compared to the normal 1 percent for such efforts.

The initial mailing was in the Washington, D.C., area, but its success easily convinced the company executives to expand such campaigns throughout the chain. Officials knew the offer — a significant discount — would appeal to most consumers if the postcards reached the intended audience.

Thanks to Every Door Direct Mail, that was not a problem. [i](#)

MAP BY ANN PERRY AND PARTNERS

touch / tap / play / read / swipe / rotate <repeat>

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PLAYING

How Minor League Baseball™ leverages an eye-popping array of direct marketing tactics to stoke fan interest in the national pastime.

MARKET



by Justice B. Hill

Illustrations by John S. Dykes

BAT





The traffic on Interstate 80 slowed to a crawl before coasting to a stop on the shoulder outside Werner Park. Craning their necks, drivers and their passengers stared as the star-spangled fireworks exploded in the air overhead this Fourth of July weekend in Papillion, Neb.



On this Sunday last summer, the Omaha Storm Chasers could well have sent a record crowd of 9,023 fans home disappointed in a 2-0 loss. The ballgame wasn't what they had filled the place to see, though; the ballgame seldom gets the star's treatment here.

The rocket's red glare always does.

"Obviously, the biggest night for us, in our storied history, is always that Fourth of July weekend," says Ben Hemmen, the promotions

manager for the Storm Chasers. "That weekend is the highlight of our summer."

Few people who follow Minor League Baseball would disagree.

The Fourth is all teams can hope for: warm weather, kids out of school, holiday time. The peculiar mix serves as a blueprint for packed ballparks and long, snaking lines at concession stands, which is why fireworks on Independence Day highlight the promotional calendar for minor league teams.

They send out a lot of material about their promotions. They have to.

While baseball remains the national pastime, the sport often finds itself in a tug-of-war for people's free time and entertainment dollars. To win, minor league teams can't count on the quality of the product they put on the diamond. Instead, while the big-league parents provide and pay the ballplayers, the minor league affiliates create the unforgettable moments.

New twists on the ol' ball game

Minor league teams promise a good time at the ballpark, and they deliver.

Yet like any business today, baseball teams have to promote their product hard. In a world of social media and online hookups, teams like the Storm Chasers tweet, text, blog and use Facebook. Direct mail is also a serious player in the marketing media mix.

You can chat away on instant messaging, but

nothing connects with people better than a letter, Hemmen says. A letter has a visceral feel that the impersonal world of tweets and texts and e-mails never duplicates.

"E-mails are great," he says. "But so many times e-mails get lost, or you've got the wrong e-mail address. We all get very fancied up with the idea of instant communication. People can hold a letter; it's tangible, and it doesn't get lost that way."

Hemmen doesn't want a single promotion

of his to get lost on Storm Chasers fans; 1,500 of them are season ticketholders.

He's hardly alone in that regard. Teams from the East Coast to West mirror what the Storm Chasers (a Triple-A club) do, and weave a range of communications into their promotional strategies.

Tweets, texts, IMs and e-mails fit well into that strategy. They deliver baseball info in an instant. But Hemmen, who augments his digital marketing with monthly newsletter mailings to

fans, and other baseball marketers know relying on these social media alone is to slow the flow of information. The mail serves as a valuable communication link between social media and baseball fans.

Fan mail

The Trenton Thunder thinks so, anyway.

For the 2012 season, the Double-A ball club is letting fans know about its “All-You-Can-Eat” nights.

And how? The U.S. mail.

The flyers the Thunder mails out tell fans that, for the price of a single ticket, they can pig out on hot dogs, burgers and cheeseburgers, says Bill Cook, director of public relations. “People get a kick out of it,” Cook says. “It’s free — free food at the ballpark. You can’t go wrong there.”

Baseball fans can find more than hot dogs and popcorn on the Thunder’s promotional calendar. To draw them to the 6,440-seat Mercer County Waterfront Stadium, the team uses no-doubt-about-it promotions like “Thirsty Thursdays,” “\$1 Dog Night” and “Bobblehead Night,” a promotion that even big league teams use.

The Thunder tries to put a different spin on the latter. The team has decked out these dolls with the big, plastic wobbling heads in different uniforms, put two players on one figurine and given out miniature versions of the traditional bobblehead.

“I keep waiting for the fad to die,” Cook says. “But people still love bobblehead giveaways.”

Bobbleheads make a cheap, popular promotion, and a good promotion seldom dies; it just remakes itself. Even if one were to die, a minor league front office somewhere would resurrect it from the grave.

There’s not much the Asheville Tourists need to resurrect, says Jon Clemmons, the team’s promotions and merchandise manager. The Tourists use cost-friendly, unique promotions to satisfy their loyal fans and encourage visitors to attend a game at the 4,000-seat historic McCormick Field.

The Tourists target each customer group with some sort of promotion depending on the day of the week. Clemmons sends out reminders of the daily promotions — from a “kids eat free” pizza night to a senior appreciation night — prior to each home stand. Electronic media, the local newspaper, Twitter, Facebook and blogs help spread the word.

Switching pitches

The marketing mix Clemmons formulates works wonderfully for Asheville, a Single-A team. It might not work in Omaha, Trenton or other places across the minor league landscapes.

Take the Tucson Padres.

One audience the Tucson Padres cater to is the military, says Tim Hagerty, the media relations director for the Triple-A team.

How could they not?

Within a half-tank of gas from Kino Stadium are Davis-Monthan Air Force Base and Fort Huachuca Army Garrison, which means men and women in uniform are everywhere you turn.

Hagerty says the Tucson Padres are mindful of that large audience. So the team has its

crowd,” Hagerty says. “We’ve gotten a great response from the military.”

Night lights and newsletters

The Akron Aeros, the Double-A affiliate of a major league team in the Midwest, have no built-in audience like the military they can tap, so assistant general manager Ken Fogel has to rely on what he knows will be a hit with fans: fireworks.

“No one I’ve ever talked to can explain it,” says Fogel, whose career has taken him to eight minor league stops. “Maybe the fireworks makers can, but everywhere I’ve been it’s been the same: Fireworks are popular.”

Fogel says the Aeros don’t have to do much to promote fireworks. Not anymore. Their fans know every Friday home game will be “Fireworks

Night,” and for this season, Saturday games will be a “Fireworks Night” too.

Meanwhile, the team uses its mail marketing dollar to promote its mini-ticket plans. The 20-games package is easier to sell than an entire season package, particularly since the Aeros open their home schedule in the chill of an Ohio April.

To sell their mini-packages, the Aeros, who have a 20,000-person e-mail list, target ZIP Code™ locations and regions that have expendable incomes and children. Fogel estimates that

more than 50 percent of what the team does to promote its ticket packages is done with mail.

Fogel’s approach in Akron is similar to most minor league franchises — aside from a team here and there like the Storm Chasers, who rely more heavily on their mail program.

Once a month, Ben Hemmen from the Storm Chasers mails a newsletter to fans. Last season, the Storm Chasers had 1,500 groups stream through the turnstiles at Werner Park, and the ball club isn’t about to let its intimate connection with those fans slip.

The team is conscious of not crossing the line, though. It wants the intimacy, but it doesn’t want to annoy — to go beyond what its fans expect from the pop-culture icon baseball is.

Fans want fireworks; they get fireworks. For nothing is more American at a ballgame on Independence Day than fireworks.

Except maybe \$1 dogs.

“Our sole purpose is to cater to the fans,” Hemmen says. “We want to be able to offer them an opportunity to enjoy a family-friendly, fun environment, and that’s what our ballpark does.” **d**

IF YOU PROMOTE IT, THEY WILL COME. Even if you aren’t trying to pack a stadium, you can apply some of Minor League Baseball’s practices to your next direct marketing campaign. Our deeper dive shows what you can do to get people to notice your product, like: including promotional items, appealing to your target’s inner child and personalizing your campaign. delivermagazine.com/strategy.



DRIVING 'EM IN:

Teams such as the Trenton Thunder use a variety of direct marketing offers, such as this 2011 mailer, to maintain fan interest and keep stadium seats filled.

\$1.50 beer nights with fireworks and all the standard minor league fare. But the Tucson Padres turn their home games on Sundays into a salute to the military, a promotion they call “Military Appreciation Day.” For their Sunday games, the Tucson Padres bring in a military guard and they honor soldiers, one of whom throws out the first pitch.

“People who don’t have a tie to the military, you can tell they are oftentimes touched by that and happy that we have such a military-based



MINOR LEAGUE BASEBALL TRADEMARKS ARE USED WITH PERMISSION

AUCTION MARKETERS

MAKE A BID TO WIN

As major auctioneers seek to promote products and heighten customer awareness, many are **turning to integrated direct marketing campaigns** to help make the sale.

BY EDDIE B. ALLEN



It was among the most unusual items ever presented to Hansen & Young Auctioneers in more than 20 years. The “robotic milker,” recalls Bridget Siler, briefly posed a problem for the company that would be tasked with generating bidders: No one knew what the heck it was. Did robots even drink milk?



As Hansen & Young's marketing manager, Siler soon educated herself on what turned out to be a high-tech farm device for milking cows. And though the client actually had three of the devices to sell, the milker was so rare that finding consumers loomed as a huge challenge. Fortunately for Siler, there was direct mail.

After conducting Internet research on farmers in Wisconsin's rural areas, Siler launched an aggressive postcard effort that was specifically targeted to the agrarian outposts, mailing pieces to a select list of addressees that she identified as potential buyers. For Siler, the effort leveraged the research power of the Web while also allowing her Prairie Farm, Wisc.-based company to use mail to reach an audience — farm owners — who she figured may not necessarily be as web-dependent as some other targets.

Hansen & Young eventually found buyers for all three of the robotic milkers, with the sale and Siler's postcard campaign offering only one example of how direct mail continues to provide key boosts to an age-

old form of commerce — auctions. In a trade that the National Auctioneers Association (NAA) has reported to be a quarter-trillion-dollar industry, mail plays a leading role in helping auctioneers stir interest in products, target prospective clients, boost participation and generate brand awareness.

Hansen & Young, for one, relies heavily on address lists for a marketing machine that churns out between 1,500 and 3,000 mail pieces monthly. “We work with a mailing list company and, depending on how specialized the item is, we’ll do our own searches to find addresses,” Siler says.

Typically, the company uses postcards or trifold brochures featuring images of the items that customers hope to sell. At times, the number of properties can increase the mail volume sent to potential buyers by as many as 10,000 pieces spanning just weeks, adds Siler.

“A direct mail item is something tangible,” she says. “We specialize in online auctions and we’re trying to reach the people who don’t really think

of auctions as a way of buying something. So whenever they see something colorful cross their desk, it’s more likely to get their attention.”

The average person, whose closest experience to a public auction might be shopping eBay, is likely to associate auctioneering with a man speaking rapid-fire into a microphone. But Chris Longly describes auctioneers as “advertising gurus.” (“Auction houses,” by contrast, are the physical locations where goods are stored prior to being sold off.)

“When people think of auctioneers, they think of fast-talking chants and bid-calls,” says Longly, deputy executive director of the NAA. “That’s actually 1 percent of what auctioneers do. The auctioneer is the person who’s handling the process from beginning to end, meeting with the customer, sitting down, assessing the value, and making the sale. You hire auctioneers because they’re experts at marketing, they help establish the value of the item and create a market for your item to be sold.

“By putting an arbitrary price on it, you may be losing money. Say I have a Van Gogh (painting) that I think is worth \$65 million. Well, if I can get \$65 million for it, I’ll sell it for that, but through an auctioneer, I might find out it’s really worth \$80 million.”

Illustrating the value of direct marketing in maximizing client profits, Longly cites the recent sale of a machine gun and pistol once used by the notorious gangsters known as Bonnie and Clyde. It’s typical, he says, for an auctioneer to run ads in trade magazines — the Bonnie and Clyde memorabilia might be promoted in *Guns & Ammo*, for example — and to push the bid item online. They often then augment that with mail marketing.

In the case of the legendary gangsters’ guns, Missouri-based Mayo Auction and Realty sent out about 2,000 postcards to a preselected portion of the collectors in its database, part of a larger effort to entice bidders. “A pair of guns believed to have been owned and used by the outlaws Bonnie and Clyde” headlined the piece, which also listed Mayo’s website and contact information. The graphics featured black-and-white shots of the 1930s-era bank robbers, one of which depicted Bonnie pointing one of the weapons at Clyde in a mock arrest. The campaign helped Mayo net a \$210,000 winning bid for the firearms.

“That mailer is how I’m going to attract you,” Longly says, “because if you’re not reading *Guns & Ammo*, if you’re not searching ‘mobster guns,’ the auctioneer is still going to deliver the information. That’s where direct mail comes in. The more bidders, the more competition; the more competition, the more money.”

“Our industry,” he continues, “is simple bartering. If I’m a caveman and I have the patent rights for fire, or the wheel, I want to get the most money for selling that patent. So I want as many people as possible trying to buy it from me.”

Together with a national newspaper, the NAA hosts an annual marketing competition that features direct mail as one of its key categories. The contest’s most recent “grand champion” was a South African marketing firm whose mail promo pieces helped them auction off a multimillion-dollar jet.

Award-winning graphic designer Ryan George, who creates mail pieces through his company Biplane Productions, has helped advertise almost 3,000 auctions in most of the 50 states. “I give marketing seminars at auctioneer events around the country every year, always praising and defending the value of direct mail,” says George. “Due to the short marketing time periods, often as little as two to four weeks, a lot of media are typically not flexible enough to target a specific group of buyers. But with demographic mailing lists, targeted direct mail can go from auctioneer notes into the hands of potential buyers in less than a week.”

He adds that real estate auctioneers, in particular, depend on the geographic targeting that direct mail allows. “Farm properties and acreage tracts are regularly purchased by an adjoining neighbor or nearby buyer,” says George. “Commercial properties often go to local end users and investors. For residential real estate outside of the luxury and vacation markets, buyers usually come from within a short radius of the property.”

A Minnesota client of Biplane Productions reported in recent years that 88 percent of on-site bidders showed up at an auction with George’s mail piece in-hand. Such remarkable returns on Postal investments are only made possible through data-mining for potential buyers, says NAA’s Longly. “There are clubs across the country that collect certain kinds of dolls,” he adds, “so if I look up those clubs, I may find women who’ve collected a specific type of doll their whole lives. They’d go on the list that targets bidders when an original comes up for sale.”

NAA uses mail to communicate with its 4,000 members. Including its subscriber-based *Auctioneer* magazine, Longly says NAA annually distributes about 20,000 pieces. “I just sent out a mail piece to 3,000 members to tell them to book flights for our upcoming conference,” he says. “Direct mail shows you care about the message.”

Some shops can sustain their entire business by printing ads and sending them to bidders worldwide. Eugene, Ore.-based Quick Service Auction Printing mails a whopping 5 million pieces to potential buyers, reveals manager Steve Holden. Says Holden: “It is a changing industry in that the younger generation will buy stuff online without even looking at it, but the older generation wants to look at something before they buy it.”

At Hansen & Young, Siler says success with direct mail has helped the company expand to an international clientele. She says also that mail works well for “higher end” clients seeking to auction valuables. “From project to project, we’ll get an overall budget and ask how much they’d like to spend, with part of it going toward mail,” she says.

George suggests a logical link between the growth of auction companies and effective mail campaigning. “Only direct mail can be sent to every house in a neighborhood, carrier route, or ZIP Code,” he says. “E-mailing to an entire ZIP Code or getting a banner ad on the Internet to every PO Box-holder in a town is also next to impossible. But direct mail can do all of that — and it has to be physically handled at least once.”



NO PLAYING AROUND: Auctioneers push even the most whimsical of wares through an array of mail pieces, including catalogs, brochures and oversized postcards.

PREVIOUS SPREAD: DAVID ZATZ; PHOTONICA; GETTY IMAGES; LEFT: OCEAN, CORBIS

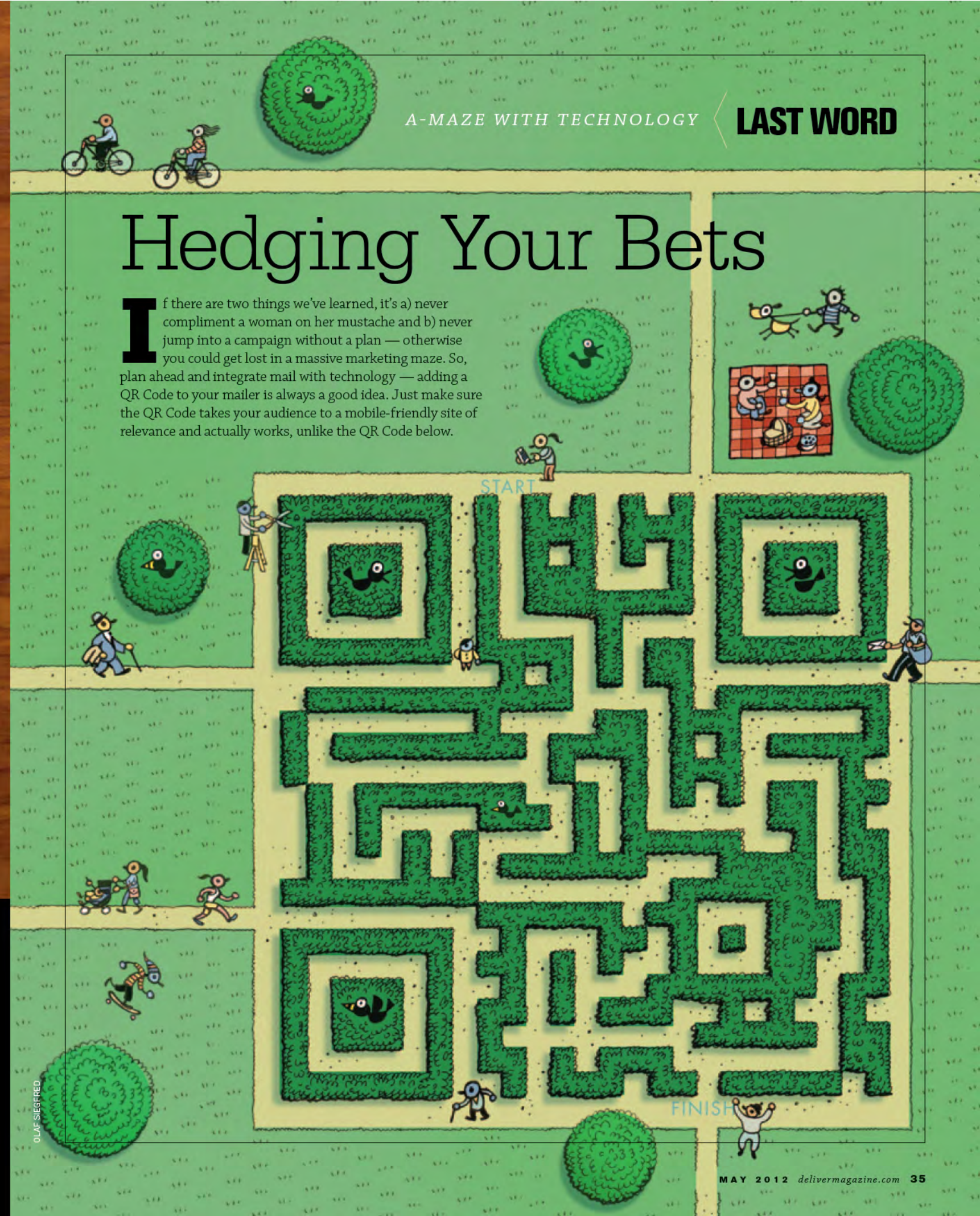


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If there are two things we've learned, it's a) never compliment a woman on her mustache and b) never jump into a campaign without a plan — otherwise you could get lost in a massive marketing maze. So, plan ahead and integrate mail with technology — adding a QR Code to your mailer is always a good idea. Just make sure the QR Code takes your audience to a mobile-friendly site of relevance and actually works, unlike the QR Code below.

